



# Democracy and Media Decadence

*By John Keane*

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## Democracy and Media Decadence By John Keane

We live in a revolutionary age of communicative abundance in which many media innovations - from satellite broadcasting to smart glasses and electronic books - spawn great fascination mixed with excitement. In the field of politics, hopeful talk of digital democracy, cybercitizens and e-government has been flourishing. This book admits the many thrilling ways that communicative abundance is fundamentally altering the contours of our lives and of our politics, often for the better. But it asks whether too little attention has been paid to the troubling counter-trends, the decadent media developments that encourage public silence and concentrations of unlimited power, so weakening the spirit and substance of democracy. Exploring examples of clever government surveillance, market censorship, spin tactics and back-channel public relations, John Keane seeks to understand and explain these trends, and how best to deal with them. Tackling some tough but big and fateful questions, Keane argues that 'media decadence' is deeply harmful for public life.

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

"John Keane doesn't answer all your questions about the new media and democracy - but he makes it impossible for you to credit those who pretend to. In energetic, sometimes gripping, prose he offers indispensable conceptual tools (particularly "monitory democracy") for a fresh look at where democracy stands in an age of communicative abundance teetering on the edge of communicative decay. A brilliant work!" -Michael Schudson Professor, Columbia Journalism School

"Vanquishing received wisdom and resisting cliché, John Keane charts the transformative impact of communicative abundance. Invoking McLuhan, Derrida, Curran and others, he perceptively constructs a significant vision: an emerging "monitory democracy" dependent on new roles for media and very new relationships between media institutions, technology and society." -Monroe E. Price, Director for the Center for Global Communications Studies at the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School for Communication, and Professor of Law, Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law

"With impressive intellectual breadth and rich analytic insight, John Keane's engaging new book moves us beyond conventional ways of thinking about media and democracy. Addressing key debates, his writing is, as always, accessible, compelling, and edifying." -Peter Dahlgren, Lund University

#### About the Author

Renowned globally for his creative thinking about democracy, John Keane is Professor of Politics at the University of Sydney and at the Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin (WZB). Among his best-known recent books are *Global Civil Society?* (Cambridge University Press, 2003), *Violence and Democracy* (Cambridge University Press, 2004), and the highly-acclaimed *The Life and Death of Democracy* (2009).

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